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POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

Difficult Duties of the Business Manager of National Conventions.

TROUBLES OF THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Executive Ability of a High Order Required—Army of Helpers Are Employed—Total Cost of a Party Convention.

In the eye of the public the permanent chairman of a national convention is by far the most important official connected with such a gathering. And, in truth, no one may gain the chairman's position or power. For a brief period they are supreme, at least nominally, and more than one chairman has so conducted himself while wielding the gravel of a nominating party conclave as to change the history of his party, the nation and perhaps the world. Sometimes indeed, perhaps generally, the chairman is only a figurehead, put in to carry out a program agreed upon beforehand, and possibly those who preside over the two national conventions this year will be chairman of this sort. But at all events they will fill necessary functions. No convention could deliberate without a presiding officer; to man whose party standing was not of the best would be chosen permanent chairman in any circumstances whatever. It's a great honor to be permanent chairman of a national convention, as all men who have ever held the post will agree.

But indispensable and powerful as the permanent chairman may seem to be, there is one other national convention functionary who is quite as indispensable and often of greater actual power. In a certain practical way he is almost infinitely more powerful. The chairman has no patronage, or next to none, at his command, but this other functionary—officially known as the sergeant-at-arms—gives it out in chunks. His title would be far more accurate were he termed the convention's business manager. It is true that his functions are those of a sergeant-at-arms while the convention is in actual session, but the greater part of all his duties are those of a business manager, pure and simple. These duties extend over several weeks always, sometimes the weeks lengthened out into months.

Must Have Executive Force.

The sergeant-at-arms is appointed by and is under the direct control of the convention subcommittee of the national committee. On the republican side this year the subcommittee is composed of Messrs. Scott of West Virginia, Keene of New Jersey, Manley of Maine, Payne of Wisconsin and Kerens of Missouri, besides Committee President Hanna and Secretary Dick, ex-officio. The subcommittee held its important meeting in Philadelphia the other day and the democratic subcommittee met recently in Kansas City. Both will hold meetings at intervals from now on to the convening of the national gathering. All matters of general convention interest are discussed and settled at these meetings, but the carrying out of the details will be intrusted to the sergeant-at-arms solely.

The most important duty of the convention subcommittee, of course, is fixing the city in which the convention is to be held, and in the main this is properly enough a question of money. From some of the rather loosely worded dispatches sent out about the cash required to be put up by the convention city the impression has gone out that the republican subcommittee made a definite demand for \$100,000. To be exact, the authorities of Philadelphia and other cities were told, as they have been once in four years for several decades, that the local expenses of the convention must be guaranteed. The sum of \$100,000 was mentioned because the expense at St. Louis last year reached that figure, or approximately so. Should the running expenses fall under the estimate the residue will be turned back to the citizens' committee. Should they exceed it the deficit will have to be made up, of course.

After the selection of the convention city the next most important step is the selection of the sergeant-at-arms, for he will spend the thousands guaranteed for local expenses; he will have to see that the convention hall is in good shape when the gathering is called to order; through him, largely, the convention authorities will hold relations with the press, the local authorities of the convention city, the railroads and the public generally. In short, the convention sergeant-at-arms is in the way of doing either a good deal of good or a good deal of harm, according to his lights. Financially, his responsibilities are heavy, since, besides the large amounts he pays out in local expenses, he has to arrange in a measure for the expenditure of several times as much more, and thus the total expense of a convention may be greatly increased or decreased by the sergeant-at-arms. It certainly may be said with truth that he must be a man of exceptional judgment, great capacity and unusual executive force.

Convention Halls.

Naturally, one of the first things to which the sergeant-at-arms must give attention is the building in which the convention is to be held. It is not sufficient for it to contain a big enough auditorium to seat the delegates and others in attendance; it must have many auxiliary features that are possessed by few of the great halls. It is not too much, perhaps, to say that there is only one building in the United States, not built or remodeled expressly for the holding of a national convention, that could be used for that purpose without many changes and additions. This is the Madison Square Garden, in New York, but it is hardly probable that its roof will ever shelter a body of men gathered to nominate a president of the United States. In 1896 a building had to be specially erected for the republican convention in St. Louis, the city then having no structure at all adapted to convention uses. This made the total convention cost of that year very large, but the building remained after the adjournment of the convention, and will be available for any like national gatherings that may hereafter be held in St. Louis.

Many thousands of dollars must be spent on the hall in Philadelphia, in which the republican convention is to be held this year, before it will be ready for the big gathering. The auditorium itself must be remodeled, a number of waiting, subcommittee and other special rooms must be put in, new sanitary and ventilation systems must be provided and facilities for the correspondents and reporters must be created. These include desks and seats in the big

hall, a writing room just off the hall, rooms for the operators of the two big telegraph companies and the press associations and the installation of wires and instruments. In making the hall ready for the convention, then, the sergeant-at-arms must have dealings with architects, builders, electric outfitters, plumbers and all sorts of trades people, besides the newspapers, the press association and the telegraph companies, and this part of his duties alone will test alike his patience, his tact and his capacity for work.

Newspapers and the Convention.

One of the most difficult tasks of the sergeant-at-arms will be to satisfy the newspaper. Readers of the full convention report that will appear in the newspapers next June and July may occasionally give a thought or two to the immense amount of labor involved in the daily presentation of the news from the bat. But no one who has not had something to do with the work can have any save the most inadequate notion of the preliminary detailed work that alone makes them possible.

To begin with, the sergeant-at-arms must be absolutely impartial in arranging the press facilities. That is, he must see to it that no one newspaper, press association or telegraph company has undue advantage over any of the others. Of course, greater facilities are given to the great metropolitan journals of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Boston than to papers in the smaller towns. The number of men representing each to which accommodations are furnished is fixed, as a rule, according to precedent, but nearly every important daily asks for more than it can have, apparently on principle, and there are hundreds of papers all told that demand special concessions which must be granted. Besides the legitimate requests for press facilities applications for privilege as reporters and correspondents are always made by large numbers of individuals who have no right whatever to expect them, and these make life nothing less than a burden to the overworked sergeant-at-arms from the moment he takes official charge of the preliminary convention details.

Waiting to See the Sergeant-at-Arms.

The intention on his part always is to afford every possible facility to newspaper men actually employed to report the proceedings, but there are physical limitations to the amount of space that can be given to the newspapers and this makes the bogus "journalists," friends of the editors of small weeklies and the like who wish to have seats among the real correspondents for the fun of it and nothing more, a nuisance pure and simple. Literally thousands of this class, some of them introduced by editors who should know better, besiege the convention sergeant-at-arms every four years and are perforce turned down; even were he contented to afford the requested facilities he could not do so without withholding them from men who are justly entitled to them, and that would never do.

Business as the Manager of one of our greater commercial enterprises, and this requires typewriters, bookkeepers, messengers, clerks and all-round assistants of several grades. It also requires rather extensive office facilities and D. G. Wiswell of Waco, Tex., who will be sergeant-at-arms of the republican convention this year, has already chosen his headquarters at one of the Philadelphia hotels. When the convention is at hand he has likewise engaged a corps of watchmen and scrubwomen to keep the big building in apple-pie order.

Though he is kept constantly busy all through the weeks of preparation his real rush doesn't come till the first day of the convention. From then till the adjournment he is the most harassed and put upon man in the whole country and if he isn't a physical wreck by the time the gathering disperses it's because he is blessed with an iron constitution.

Unlike the deputy sergeant-at-arms and the doorkeepers, the office help, messengers, watchmen and scrubwomen are paid for their services, but the sergeant-at-arms himself receives no direct pay. His expenses are borne by the committee, but he goes through all the work and worry of getting the convention preliminaries into shape and keeping the crowd in good order during its sessions for the honor there is in it and the wide acquaintance it will give him among the prominent men of his own party. Because of these things his place is in making enemies in turning down those for whom places might be found.

At first blush you might wonder why anyone would put up a fight to be an assistant sergeant-at-arms, since no pay, not even ex-

shall serve, but actually his decisions are based upon the recommendations of the delegates. Each of these is almost sure to ask for more places than can be given, and the sergeant-at-arms sometimes has a hard time to avoid making enemies in turning down those for whom places might be found.

Democracy's Business Manager.

The sergeant-at-arms of the democratic convention will not begin his preliminary work this year until some time in May, the democratic convention being held more than two weeks later than the republican gathering, and the work to be done on the Kansas City hall being of less magnitude than on the one in Philadelphia. The convention sergeant-at-arms always has the friendly assistance of the sergeant-at-arms of the national committee. Colonel H. L. Swords, now deputy collector of customs in New York, has held that post with the republican committee for a number of campaigns, while James Oliver, of "Paradise Park," in the city of New York, has held the same place with the democratic committee. Each of the two knows every important leader in the party well, and is therefore able to give invaluable pointers to the convention sergeant-at-arms. Mr. Oliver will not assist the sergeant-at-arms this year, however, having determined to spend the summer in Alaska. This year's national democratic convention will be the first he has missed for many years.

The local expenses of a national convention, which are directly controlled by the sergeant-at-arms, make up only a fraction of the total sums such a gathering puts into circulation. There are nearly 1,000 delegates and as many alternates, making 2,000, while the assistant sergeant-at-arms, doorkeepers, messengers and correspondents will swell the essential attendance to 3,000. Besides, there are probably 1,000 visitors daily, and if each of the resulting 4,000 spends \$100 for hotel bills and the like while the convention is in session the total is \$400,000. Add railroad fare, news telegrams and other incidentals and the grand total can't well be less than \$1,000,000. Some estimates by men who have attended many national conventions place it at a much higher figure.

THE GUYED GORMAN THAWED.

But Not Until the Western Politician Had Fun with Him.

Not long ago a rather prominent politician from the middle west was in Washington, relates the Chicago Journal. He had heard of Gorman for years and wanted to meet him. One day the opportunity presented itself and an introduction followed. The two were left together and then the visitor tried to draw the Maryland boss out on various questions of public interest—not abruptly or with a view to making any use of

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What might be said, but more through respectful curiosity than anything else. Gorman retired into his hole, as usual. The visitor was nettled and made up his mind to force the fighting.

"By the way, Mr. Gorman," he said, "what are your initials?"

"My name is Arthur Pue Gorman, sir," was the reply.

"Oh, yes, and I believe you are from Virginia, or is it from North Carolina?"

"Maryland, sir," was the response, Gorman beginning to be a little annoyed.

"Of course, it is Maryland; how stupid of me not to remember," said the visitor, adding: "You were in the house once, were you not—or was it the senate?"

Gorman nearly stopped breathing. His face grew red. The idea that a man of his visitor's prominence should not be familiar with the public career of the gentleman from Maryland was almost beyond comprehension. Rather testily he replied: "I was a member of the senate, sir, and flatter myself that during my terms of service I was not wholly a useless member and contributed in some degree to shaping the policy of any party."

"What was your party, Mr. Gorman? You were a republican, were you not?"

This was too much. Gorman grew ready to utter a volley of high explosives, but as he turned to face his visitor he saw a merry twinkle in the caller's eye. The westerner had been giving him, and he was just finding it out. It is needless to suggest that the remainder of the interview, which was by far the longer part of it, was of a most cordial and friendly character, and that the Marylander, to use a street expression, almost "coughed up his boots" on all matters of public interest, and more than fulfilled the expectations of the man who had met him for the first time. The man, by the way, is now one of Gorman's greatest admirers and would like to see him president of the United States.

HAZARINE CLEARED AT LAST.

Empress Eugenie Confesses that She Ordered the Surrender of Metz.

After maintaining absolute silence for exactly thirty years Empress Eugenie has at length consented to reveal the part which she played in the early relation of Metz to the Germans in 1870—that surrender for which the grizzled and battle-scarred veteran, Marshal Bazaine, was condemned by court-martial to the death of a traitor, his sentence being subsequently commuted to one of life-long imprisonment by his old friend and comrade, Marshal MacMahon, who probably had an inkling of the real circumstances of the case. In a letter addressed to a member of the Walruska family, and which not only bears the signature of the empress, but is from beginning to end in her own handwriting, she admits that she not only urged but actually commanded Marshal Bazaine to consent to the surrender of Metz. In the expectation that it would lead to an armistice and place at her disposal the immense French army shut up in the beleaguered city, which also could then be used for the purpose of re-establishing her authority as regent and reviving the monarchy, if not in favor of her captive husband, at any rate in behalf of her boy, the ill-fated Prince Imperial. Hazarine, it must be remembered, owed everything to Napoleon III, during whose reign he had worked his way up from the ranks to the loftiest position in the army. He possessed that virtue which, it is said, was rare in France, namely, gratitude, and when misfortunes overtook his patron and benefactor—the sovereign to whom he had solemnly sworn allegiance—he felt it to be his duty to remain loyal and to his emperor and to his emperor and to turn a deaf ear to that Gallic industry preached by the great Prince Talleyrand, which he had worked his way up from the ranks to the loftiest position in the army. He possessed that virtue which, it is said, was rare in France, namely, gratitude, and when misfortunes overtook his patron and benefactor—the sovereign to whom he had solemnly sworn allegiance—he felt it to be his duty to remain loyal and to his emperor and to his emperor and to turn a deaf ear to that Gallic industry preached by the great Prince Talleyrand, which he had worked his way up from the ranks to the loftiest position in the army.

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